

Therefore, there are four types of cognitive obstructions that are gradually eliminated by the uninterrupted paths of the eighth, ninth, and tenth bhumi:

- (1) As mentioned above, the eighth bhumi has two uninterrupted paths, the second of which eliminates **big** cognitive obstructions.
- (2) The uninterrupted path of the ninth bhumi eliminates **medium** cognitive obstructions
- (3) The tenth bhumi also has two interrupted paths. The first eliminates **coarse small** cognitive obstructions
- (4) The second uninterrupted path of the tenth bhumi (called the “*Uninterrupted Path at the End of the Continuum*”) eliminates the **subtle small** cognitive obstructions (See chart of the ten bhumis)

However, the ten Bodhisattva bhumis are not only characterized by the objects of elimination (the obstructions) that are removed but also by the practice of the ten perfections. The ten perfections are:

1. The perfection of generosity
2. The perfection of morality
3. The perfection of patience
4. The perfection of diligence/joyous effort
5. The perfection of concentration
6. The perfection of wisdom
7. The perfection of skilful means
8. The perfection of prayer
9. The perfection of power
10. The perfection of exalted wisdom

(Please note that the first six of the ten perfections constitute the six perfections.)

Even though Bodhisattvas engage in the practice of all ten perfections on all levels of the Mahayana path, they focus specifically on the practice of *one* of the perfections during the subsequent attainment paths of each of the ten bhumis:

- 1) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **first bhumi** they focus specifically on the practice of the **perfection of generosity**
- 2) During the subsequent attainment path of the **second bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of morality**
- 3) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **third bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of patience**
- 4) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **fourth bhumi** on the practice the **perfection of diligence**
- 5) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **fifth bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of concentration**
- 6) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **sixth bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of wisdom**
- 7) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **seventh bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of skilful means**
- 8) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **eighth bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of prayer**
- 9) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **ninth bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of power**
- 10) During the subsequent attainment paths of the **tenth bhumi** on the practice of the **perfection of exalted wisdom**

Next follows a detailed description of each of the bhumis:

The first Bodhisattva bhumi

As explained before, the first Bodhisattva bhumi is twofold:

- 1) The first bhumi that pertains to the path of seeing
- 2) The first bhumi that pertains to the path meditation

The first bhumi that pertains to the path of seeing

The Mahayana path of seeing and the first bhumi that pertains to the path of seeing are equivalent.

The first bhumi that pertains to the path of meditation

Like the other bhumis, the first bhumi that pertains to the path of meditation consists of (1) meditative equipoise paths and (2) subsequent attainment paths. Meditative equipoise paths are further divided into (1) an uninterrupted path and (2) a path of release.

The first moment of the Mahayana path of meditation, the first moment of the first Bodhisattva bhumi that pertains to the path of meditation and the first moment of the *uninterrupted path* of the first bhumi that pertains to the path of meditation are equivalent.

As mentioned above, the uninterrupted path of the first bhumi eliminates **coarse big-big** innate afflictive obstructions, and the path of release achieves the cessation of those obstructions.

When Bodhisattvas rise from the meditative equipoise paths they enter the paths of subsequent attainment.

Examples of such paths of subsequent attainment are love, compassion, the practice of the six perfections, the wisdom that directly realizes subtle impermanence, the wisdom that conceptually realizes emptiness, etc. in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the first bhumi of the path of meditation.

Furthermore, during the subsequent attainment period of both parts of the first bhumi – the first bhumi that pertains to the path of seeing and the first bhumi that pertains to the path of meditation – Bodhisattvas focus specifically on the practice of the perfection of generosity.

Please note that in order to proceed from the first to the second bhumi, practitioners enter again into a meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness. This meditative equipoise constitutes the last moment of the first Bodhisattva bhumi, and since it is neither an uninterrupted path nor a path of release, it is called a “*simple meditative equipoise*” (Tibetan: *mnyam gzhaq tsam po ba*).

Hence, the process of progressing from the first to the second bhumi differs from the process of progressing from the Mahayana path of seeing to the Mahayana path of meditation, because the last moment of the Mahayana path of seeing is not a meditative equipoise path but a subsequent attainment path, whereas the last moment of the first bhumi is not a subsequent attainment path but a meditative equipoise path.

The authority for this is the commonly accepted view of many Buddhist scholars that: practitioners must progress from one Arya learner path to the next (i.e. from the path of seeing to the path of meditation) by way of proceeding from a subsequent attainment path to a meditative equipoise path (directly realizing emptiness). However, practitioners must progress from one Bodhisattva bhumi to the next by way of proceeding from one meditative equipoise path (directly realizing emptiness) to another meditative equipoise path (directly realizing emptiness).

According to Panchen Sonam Drakpa’s interpretation of this view, the last moment of, for instance, the first bhumi constitutes a *simple meditative equipoise* directly realizing emptiness that does not serve as a direct antidote to any of the obstructions, and the first moment of the second bhumi constitutes an uninterrupted path directly realizing emptiness that eliminates **subtle big-big** innate afflictive obstructions. So practitioners progress from the first bhumi to the second bhumi by way of progressing from one meditative equipoise path directly realizing emptiness (the *simple meditative equipoise* pertaining to the first bhumi) to another meditative equipoise path directly realizing emptiness (the uninterrupted path pertaining to the second bhumi).

